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29 JUL 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WILLIAM EDDY

Subject: Merchant Ships Statistics

1. Reference is made to your letter dated June 24, 1947 in which you bring to the attention of the Central Intelligence Group the problem of maintaining certain minimum statistics on merchant ships throughout the world.
2. An informal preliminary survey has been conducted with the view of determining the present extent of the activities by the various federal agencies concerned with merchant ship statistics in order to reach a decision on the degree of responsibility held in the matter by the Central Intelligence Group.
3. Your letter with its enclosed copy of a letter from the Chairman, Joint Merchant Ships Statistics Board, indicates that the statistics desired on the merchant fleet include those on U. S. vessels as well as on vessels of foreign nations. A fundamental condition upon which further discussions must be predicated is that the Central Intelligence Group cannot undertake a task concerned with statistics on U. S. merchant vessels. An operation of this nature is clearly dissociated from the interests of federal intelligence agencies, and therefore outside the mission of the Central Intelligence Group.
4. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the Central Intelligence Group to ascertain the requirements of federal agencies for statistical data on foreign merchant vessels, to coordinate the collection of the data and to disseminate to those agencies requiring them in connection with their responsibilities for the national security. It is anticipated that this responsibility will be met by the production of the National Intelligence Surveys, provided for in IAB No. 1 recently approved by the Intelligence Advisory Board for the coordination of intelligence production, in conjunction with current directives coordinating the collection of intelligence and with established dissemination procedures.

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5. The Central Intelligence Group has already undertaken in the interests of the Joint Merchant Ships Statistics Board, whose membership includes representatives from the War and Navy Departments, the coordination of the collection and dissemination of foreign port data. In pursuance of its responsibility as enunciated in paragraph 4 above, [REDACTED] Chief of the Requirements Branch of the Office of Collection and Dissemination, Central Intelligence Group, is nominated to discuss the matter with Mr. Walter A. Radium, as suggested in your letter.

R. H. HILLENKOETTER
REAR ADMIRAL, USN
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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cc: [REDACTED] OCD
(Chief, Requirements Branch)
EW/ml
1-25 July 1947

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